

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 06650 311238Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 311059Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6975

CONFIDENTIAL MADRID 6650

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, SP

SUBJECT: CHANGE OF SPANISH AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON

1. DURING MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA IN SAN SEBASTIAN AUGUST 30 CONCERNING VARIOUS SUBJECTS (SEPTELS) HE TOLD ME THAT DECISION HAD NOW BEEN MADE TO SEND A NEW AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON. CHANGES WERE ALSO TO BE MADE AT FOUR OR FIVE OTHER MAJOR EMBASSIES. KING AND PRIME MINISTER HAD GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY TO SELECT THE PERSONS HE THOUGHT BEST FIT FOR THE JOBS. OREJA COMMENTED TO ME THAT IN HIS RECENT FOREIGN TRAVELS HE HAD BEEN STRUCK BY THE VERY UNEVEN PERFORMANCES IN THE SPANISH EMBASSIES AND HE WAS DETERMINED TO TRY TO UPGRADE SPANISH REPRESENTATION.

2. REGARDING WASHINGTON, OREJA RECALLED THAT DURING A BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH ME IN SAN SEBASTIAN AUGUST 28 HE HAD INDICATED THAT HE HAD EXPECTED TO GIVE ME A NOTE AUGUST 30 REQUESTING AGREEMENT FOR NUNO AGUIRRE DE CARCER, NOW DIRECTOR GENERAL OF EUROPE AND ATLANTIC AFFAIRS IN MINISTRY, AS AMBASSADOR TO US. HOWEVER, THE QUESTION HAD NOT BEEN FULLY SETTLED. HE SAID THAT FRANKLY HE WAS STRUGGLING TO DECIDE WHETHER ROVIRA OR AGUIRRE DE CARCER WAS THE BETTER MAN FOR WASHINGTON. ONE ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM RELATED TO FILLING THE NOW-VACANT POST OF AMBASSADOR IN BRUSSELS. WHILE BRUSSELS IN ITSELF

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PAGE 02 MADRID 06650 311238Z

WAS NOT VERY IMPORTANT, IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT TO

HAVE A FIRST-CLASS MAN THERE WHO UNDERSTOOD POLITICAL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS, WHO ENJOYED THE CONFIDENCE OF THE SPANISH MILITARY AND THUS WHO COULD MAINTAIN CLOSE WORKING CONTACTS WITH NATO AND WITH SACEUR HEADQUARTERS. THE KING, PRIME MINISTER AND HE ATTACHED THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO CREATING A BETTER CLIMATE NOT ONLY IN SPANISH-NATO RELATIONSHIPS BUT ALSO IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE SPANISH ARMY TOWARD NATO.

3. IT WAS ALSO VITAL, OREJA SAID, TO HAVE THE BEST MAN POSSIBLE IN WASHINGTON AND THEREFORE HE WANTED TO BE SURE ABOUT WHETHER IT WOULD BE ROVIRA OR AGUIRRE DE CARCER. HE EXPECTED TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITHIN THE NEXT 24 HOURS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND HOPED TO BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH ME BY SEPTEMBER 1.

4. FINALLY, OREJA EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT ONCE THE AGREEMENT WAS REQUESTED, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO RESPOND IN TIME FOR THE NEW AMBASSADOR TO BE IN WASHINGTON BEFORE HE (OREJA) CAME THERE FOR OCTOBER 1 MEETING OF US-SPANISH COUNCIL. I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS SURE WE WOULD DO OUR BEST TO MEET HIS TIMETABLE, EVEN THOUGH PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE BEFORE THAT DATE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE, AGREEMENT, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, AMBASSADORS, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL RECALL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 AUG 1976
Decapton Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decapton Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID06650
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760330-0373
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976084/aaaaacala.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <10 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHANGE OF SPANISH AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON
TAGS: PDIP, SP, (AGUIRRE DE CARCEL, NUNO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006